



New Jersey Department of Children and Families Policy Manual

Manual:	DCF	DCF Wide	Effective Date:
Volume:	III	Administrative Policies	
Chapter:	E	Administration	2-25-2011
Subchapter:	1	Administration	
Issuance:	001-2011	Standards of Professional Conduct for DCF Employees	

PURPOSE:

To establish a policy for all Department of Children and Families (DCF) employees on the use of appropriate and professional conduct.

SCOPE:

This applies Department-wide.

POLICY:

A. Introduction

Each Department of Children and Families (DCF) employee shall conduct him or herself in an appropriate and professional manner during the course of performing his or her public duties. Each DCF employee is responsible for **setting clear boundaries**, to assure that he or she does not establish an improper relationship with any person who is supervised, regulated, or being investigated by the Department.

This policy addresses prohibited conduct in relationship to persons being supervised, regulated or investigated by the Department of Children and Families. DCF reserves the right to take either disciplinary action or other corrective action, as appropriate, to address **any** unacceptable conduct that violates the ethics code or criminal statutes, or that is otherwise prohibited by policy, rule, regulation, disciplinary policies, or commonly accepted standards of professional conduct.

Visit the "Ethics" link on the DCF intranet home page for other information regarding the ethical conduct of a DCF employee.

B. Upon Becoming Aware of a Personal Conflict or Relationship

If an employee becomes aware that he or she is providing services to, regulating the activities of, or investigating a friend, relative, neighbor, or someone with whom he or she has an existing personal or business relationship, or when an employee develops a personal relationship with someone to whom he or she is providing services, regulating, or investigating, he or she must **immediately inform** his or her Supervisor, who must notify local management through the local chain of command.

C. Prohibited from Taking Adult or Child Home

Each DCF employee is **prohibited** from taking a **child(ren)** or an adult on his or her caseload or whom the employee knows in a professional capacity into his or her private home under **any** circumstance, unless the employee is approved as a resource parent for the child.

If emergency placement is needed for a child which cannot be secured, the employee must consult his or her Supervisor. When there is a need for assistance in securing an emergency placement, relief must be secured through the Local Office chain of command, to the Area Office and Central Office, if necessary.

This policy applies to DCF operations **at all times**, during regular work hours (9 a.m. to 5 p.m.) as well as after hours (SPRU).

D. Additional Prohibited Activities

Each DCF employee is prohibited from engaging in **any** of the following activities with any child or adult on his or her caseload or whom the employee knows in a professional capacity:

1. Exploiting his or her position to obtain special privileges, or for personal or financial gain;
2. Establishing, or participating in, a personal or professional relationship, such as, but not limited to, a romantic/sexual relationship, a business relationship of any kind, or an employer/employee relationship;
3. Inviting the child or adult into his or her home, or personal car or vehicle, for any reason;
4. Engaging in any non-business related communication via any means, including, but not limited to, telephone, cell phone, e-mail, text, or social networking site;

5. Participating in, condoning, or being associated with dishonesty, fraud, deceit, misrepresentation, or criminal or unlawful activity of any kind, including, but not limited to, substance sales or abuse;
6. Soliciting, or accepting, goods or services of any kind, whether paid or unpaid.

Note: Activities described at points 1, 5, and 6, above are universally prohibited under the ethics code, extending beyond improper employee-client actions or relationships.

E. Solicitation

If an employee experiences a solicitation to engage in inappropriate or illegal activity by any person receiving services from, or being regulated or investigated by, the Department, he or she must **report it immediately** to his or her Supervisor and **document** details about making the report for his or her own protection. The employee's Supervisor informs the local chain of command.

F. Violations

Any violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Date

Allison Blake, Ph.D., L.S.W.
Commissioner